

— Colonial Hospitals. —

By J. HASTINGS WOOD.

OF late there has been a considerable amount of discussion, and opinions have been freely expressed, as to the relative merits of Colonial Hospitals in general, and those of Cape Colony in particular.

My profession frequently causes me to travel throughout this colony, consequently I have many opportunities of visiting the various Hospitals throughout the country, and as I consider that it would be interesting to your readers, more particularly those of your Home readers who may contemplate coming to this part of the world, if I send you a brief sketch of Colonial Hospital life, which, owing to climate, inhabitants and other causes, is entirely different to Hospital life in the old country.

Time and space prevent me from embracing all our Hospitals in this sketch, so for reasons I will specify herewith, I have fixed upon the Albany General Hospital, Grahamstown.

1st. Because it is one of the most important establishments of the kind in the Colony.

2nd. Because I have frequent opportunities of not only watching its progress and advancement under the able management of the energetic Matron, Miss Magee, but having been an inmate myself for a considerable time, owing to a severe accident caused by a horse, I have further been enabled to study the inward working of the Institution. I therefore furnish your readers with a plain unvarnished statement.

The Albany General Hospital, at Grahamstown, Cape Colony, is situated on a rising ground close to the town. It commands a magnificent view on all sides, and with the fine invigorating air, combined with the best of food and attention, invalids rapidly acquire health and good spirits. The building itself is a large and commodious one in every way, suitable for all classes of patients, which recently have averaged over fifty persons, that is including natives. The building is surrounded by its own beautiful grounds, where convalescents are allowed to promenade and invigorate themselves, or to rest under the shade of the trees at will. There are at present no less than 82 beds in the building, but as this accommodation has been found to be inadequate, arrangements are being made for an increase.

The beds are divided as follows:—

A Ward	...	...	...	10	beds.
C Ward	...	...	...	5	"
Women's Ward	...	...	...	7	"
Children's Ward	...	...	...	6	"
2 Native Men's Wards	...	...	...	11	"
2 Native Female Wards	...	...	...	9	"
Accident Ward	...	...	...	5	"
4 Private Wards for Men	...	...	...	5	"
2 " " Ladies	...	...	...	3	"
1 Criminal Detention Ward	...	...	...	12	"
1 Isolation Ward	...	...	...	9	"
				82	

The criminal detention and isolation wards are detached from the main building.

The staff consists of the matron (Miss Magee), seven female nurses, one male-attendant, one cook, one housemaid, one scullery-maid (coloured), one wardman, and one messenger; fourteen all told.

The additions to the Hospital buildings within the last two years include two new wards, which have been added; new mortuary and post-mortem room have been built; and various improvements made in the sanitary arrangements.

Miss Magee's system for conducting the working of the Hospital is an excellent one, as everything is under her own personal supervision; consequently, admirable order presides in the establishment, and the work is carried through without a single hitch. The diet is good, palatable, wholesome, and well cooked; the beds are most comfortable, and the bedclothes are changed every week. The patients are supplied with a comfortable blue woollen suit of clothes. The various wards are regularly scrubbed, and everything is kept scrupulously clean and neat, giving an air of comfort to the place. The various Nurses, taking a pattern from the Matron, are exceedingly kind and attentive to those under their charge, and it cheers up the patients when they see their Nurses, in their neat uniforms, hovering around their bedsteads, ready always and willing to relieve suffering humanity. The patients, who are able, partake of their various meals around a large table in the centre of each ward which, I may say, is large and commodious. Those who are unable to rise, are served with their food in bed. The best medical advice and treatment that can be had can be found here. The prices charged for the private wards are as follows:—One room, including everything, with the exception of medical fees, 10/- per day per patient; but if two beds are in one room, then the price per patient is only 7/6 per diem, while a screen bed in general ward is charged 5/- per day for each patient.

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